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RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//OSD/ISA/EAP//

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 001077

SIPDIS

WHA/CCA FOR DAVID MCFARLAND

E.O. 12958: DECL: AFTER KOREAN REUNIFICATION
TAGS: [ETTC](#) [ETRD](#) [PREL](#) [KS](#) [CU](#)
SUBJECT: KOREA'S RESPONSE TO REVIEW FOR SUSPENSION OF TITLE
III OF THE LIBERTAD ACT

REF: A. STATE 52541
[1](#)B. SEOUL 1007

Classified By: POL M/C Joseph Y. Yun. Reasons 1.4(b/d)

[1](#)1. (C) Post's responses to the questions from reftel are attached. Responses were drafted with input provided by the Foreign Ministry (MOFAT) as appropriate. It is relevant to note that South Korea is one of only three countries that have no relations with Cuba, a point that MOFAT highlights with us in every discussion about Cuba. MOFAT also emphasizes that they fully support the U.S. position on Cuba and share our concerns about human rights and democracy in Cuba.

[1](#)2. (C) Q: Has the host country, in Post's opinion, worked to promote the advancement of democracy and human rights in Cuba? This can include demonstrations of support for and solidarity with the Cuban people connected to the May 21 Day of Solidarity with the Cuban People, for which we have asked host countries to: 1) draw attention to the plight of Cuba's prisoners of conscience, 2) call for legitimate democratic transition in Cuba, 3) carry out activities that demonstrate support for Cuba's democratic opposition, civil society, and the Cuban people in general.

--We are not aware of any efforts by the Korean government to promote the advancement of democracy and human rights in Cuba. When we approached the ROKG about our efforts to support the May 21 Cuba Solidarity Day, they declined to take any action noting that there was little interest among Koreans in Cuba and that any action the government took was not likely to have an impact on the situation in Cuba. In the same meeting, MOFAT indicated that they were considering establishing consular relations with Cuba and were interested in U.S. views on the idea (ref B).

[1](#)3. (C) Q: Has the host country made other public statements or undertaken other governmental actions, such as resolutions in the national assemblies condemning human rights abuses in Cuba; statements in support of democracy following the undemocratic succession of power from Fidel to Raul Castro; or actions in support of civil society in Cuba through host country's diplomatic missions or other fora.

--Korea has not made any public statements or undertaken government actions addressing the issue of human rights and democracy in Cuba following the succession of power to Raul Castro.

[1](#)4. (C) Q: Have there been any high-level diplomatic visits between Cuba and host country in the past six months?

--There have not been any high-level diplomatic visits between Cuba and Korea in the past six months. In March 2007, MOFAT's Director-General for Cultural Affairs, Bae Jae-hyun, visited Havana to engage in consultations on cultural exchanges.

15. (C) Q: What is the nature of investments (and names, if known) that host country businesses have in Cuba?

--Korea has, to date, made no major investments in Cuba. While invited to participate in power plant projects in Cuba via international consortia, Korean companies such as Hyundai Heavy Industries have limited their participation to sales of generators and heavy equipment to third-country consortia members rather than Cuban entities.

--Bilateral trade agreements. No bilateral trade agreement has been signed to date. However, in November 2005, the ROKG's quasi-governmental trade promotion agency, KOTRA, opened a representative office in Havana, designed to spearhead greater export sales to Cuba and to prepare for potential trade policy changes that might follow Castro's demise. Since that date, two-way trade has increased from zero to USD 230 million in 2007 and USD 110 million in the first four months of 2008. Most of these exports are sent through third countries.

16. (C) Q: Are there any exchange programs between host country and Cuba, including but not limited to: scholarships for host country nationals to study in Cuba; Cuban-paid medical travel for host country nationals; and Cuban doctors working in host country?

--MOFAT reported that recently there has been an increase in the flow of private sector tourists and goods between the two countries. About 4,000 Korean tourists visit Cuba each year. Also, MOFAT reported that mutual visits of cultural figures such as musicians and novelists were on the rise.
VERSHBOW